

Mark Drakeford AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-490  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/00056/14

William Powell AM  
AM for Mid & West Wales  
Chair Petitions committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

16 January 2014

*Dear William*

Thank you for your letter of 16 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-490 concerning the inclusion of antiretroviral HIV medicines in the 28 day prescribing rule.

I have responded to your queries as raised:

**The extent to which clinicians are able to depart from guidance. The petitioner makes the point that departure from guidance would not be something that should be lightly undertaken**

I can only reiterate the position as I reported in my previous letter of 10 July on implementation of the 28 day prescribing policy. Prescribing intervals for all medication (including antiretroviral HIV medicines) should be in line with the medically appropriate needs of the patient. I expect all Health Boards when adopting the 28 day prescribing policy to ensure the needs of the patient are taken into account and that they work closely with patients to ensure a degree of flexibility in the delivery of the medicines.

**How the saving of £15- 50 million has been arrived and why there is such a wide variation in the estimate. In addition how much, if any of this, can be attributed to savings on antiretroviral HIV medicines.**

It is estimated that wasted medicines in Wales costs the NHS a minimum £15 million a year but the Department of Health has previously estimated that 10% of the primary care prescribing budget may be wasted, which puts the value at over £50 million per year for Wales.

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**Whether the NHS in other parts of the UK uses similar guidance, in respect of antiretroviral HIV medicines, to that in use in Wales. You will note the petitioner's view that this is not the case in England at least**

I have attached a copy of the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group publication entitled 'All Wales Review and Guidance for Prescribing Intervals' published in February 2013. The guidance, although predominately relating to guidance on 28 day prescribing in Wales, does refer to the policy as having been promoted across the UK and references guidance from the NHS in England on 28 day prescribing intervals. This includes the 2010 joint report by the York Health Economics Consortium and the School of Pharmacy at the University of London supporting the use of 28-day prescribing intervals.

I hope this further information has been helpful.

Best wishes

Mark.

**Mark Drakeford AC / AM**

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